

**Amherst Budget Coordinating Group
Summary Points – September 23, 2010**

At our September 23rd meeting, the members of the Budget Coordinating Group agreed that the following points would be conveyed to our home boards and committees:

- 1) That we re-emphasize our request that the Chairs of each home board and committee distribute to their committee members hard copies of the Summary Points from each BCG meeting, and that they make a BCG Update an agenda item at their next appropriate meeting, so that those Summary Points may be reviewed. The goals are to keep all members of the home boards and committees apprised of the BCG's work, and to collect feedback from those committees to bring back to the BCG.
- 2) That the necessity of strong communication and coordination among the representatives of the Town, Schools, Libraries and Finance Committee continues as we face more financial difficulties in FY12. In addition to the challenging budget projections as stimulus funding ends before state revenues recover, uncertainties in the coming months include: tax rollback questions on the November ballot; the possibility of a new Governor; and the implications both could have for the relationship between towns and the state, and how aid is distributed. To best serve those we represent, continuing and enhancing our communication is crucial.
- 3) That optimal communication requires maximum participation by BCG reps, so we will work to put together a meeting calendar that allows all members to plan to attend.
- 4) That we continue to try to identify the most useful ways to represent historical staffing trends for the Town, Schools and Libraries. Each staffing situation is different, (reliance on part-time workers, definitions of FTE, funding sources, etc.) and it is a challenge to account for those differences while still presenting information that is helpful and has some consistency across the budget areas.
- 5) That we need to be informing our home boards and committees and the public about the serious implications of Question 1 (eliminating the sales tax on alcohol) and Question 3 (reducing the sales tax from 6.25% to 3%) on the November ballot. If these pass, they would take effect January 1st, requiring a significant mid-year cut to our FY11 State aid. For FY12, the projected impact would be a 30% aid reduction, translating to about \$4 million each to the Town and the Region. Public resources cannot be used to advocate for or against ballot questions, but it is appropriate for all officials to explain the situation and its implications to voters, and elected officials can take a position in support of or opposition to such measures.
- 6) That the FY12 Budget Calendar is being tightened up to reflect the best plans and expectations each of the boards and committees have at this point, and it will continue to be refined as time goes on. This is a key tool for sharing and coordinating information across the different bodies and assuring that the budget is developed in a timely manner for presentation at the Annual Town Meeting. The goal is to have a clean version to distribute at the October 14th Four Boards Meeting, and to have the BCG Co-Chairs make a presentation about the calendar to each of the boards and committees later in the fall.